

WORLD & NATION

Spain Becomes Last West European Nation to Establish Ties With Israel

L.A. Times Archives

Jan. 18, 1986 12 AM PT

FROM TIMES WIRE SERVICES

THE HAGUE — Spain and Israel established formal relations here Friday, ending nearly 40 years of diplomatic separation caused by Madrid's close links to Nazi Germany during World War II.

The protocol was signed in this Dutch capital in a private ceremony at the Promenade Hotel by Maximo Cajal, the Spanish Foreign Ministry's secretary general for foreign policy, and Yeshayahu Anug, deputy director general for European affairs of Israel's Foreign Ministry.

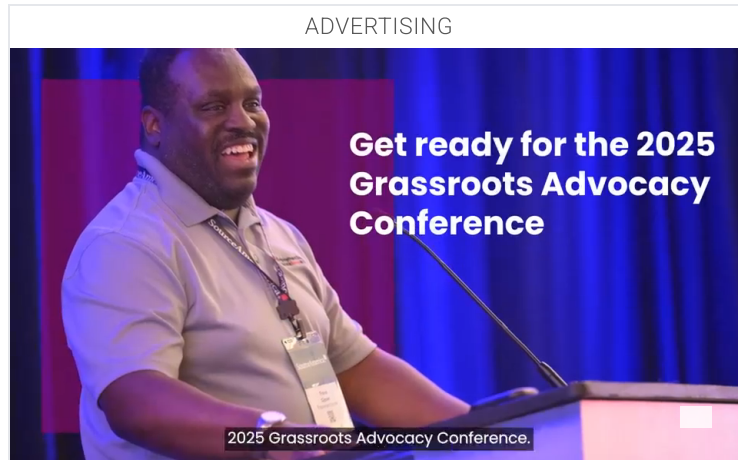
Spain is the last Western European nation to establish ties with the Jewish state.

The Spanish government accompanied the recognition with a declaration pledging continued friendship with Arab nations and denouncing Israeli occupation of Arab lands. An Israeli Embassy source said his government responded by reiterating its recent proposals for peace with the Arabs.

The establishment of diplomatic ties comes amid reports from Jerusalem that Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, turned down an offer of diplomatic relations with Spain, made by dictator Francisco Franco in 1949.

Disclosed by Shamir

The disclosure was made by Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir who told reporters in his office that Franco made the offer soon after the creation of the Jewish state in 1948 and at a time when Spain's ties with Arab states were not as close as they are today.



“I think Ben-Gurion made a mistake as one cannot ignore the existence of states, no matter what their regime,” Shamir said.

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Ben-Gurion rejected ties with Madrid because Franco's Spain had close ties with Nazi Germany and sent a division of volunteers to fight alongside German troops on the Eastern Front.

The diplomatic agreement signed Friday will be personally sealed Sunday in a meeting at The Hague between Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, both governments announced.

Arab Ties Remain

In the declaration issued after the signing ceremony Friday, Spain said it "wishes to emphasize that it will maintain its traditional policy of friendship and solidarity toward the Arab world, closely linked to Spain by shared bonds of history and culture."

The declaration called for negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which Israel has rejected on grounds that the PLO is a terrorist organization bent on destroying the Jewish state.

The Spanish government expressed support for U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which recognizes Israel's right to exist in exchange for withdrawal from occupied territories, and Resolution 338, which calls for negotiations "between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East."

Spain opposes "territorial acquisition" by force, the declaration said, and rejects the 1980 Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem. It called for dismantling of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The Spanish government considers that the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, and specifically the right to self-determination, must be

recognized and guaranteed,” it said, adding that “the right to peaceful existence for all states in the region, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, must be guaranteed.”

In Madrid, PLO representative Fayes Sami called Spain’s move “a great error” and said, “We have our hands on our hearts that (the start of ties) will not provoke a violent reprisal.”

Israeli officials have said establishing diplomatic relations was a condition of Spain’s entry into the European Communities, which occurred Jan. 1. The Israeli Embassy source said the agreement was signed in The Hague because the Netherlands is currently president of the Common Market.

Greece now is the only Common Market nation that does not have full diplomatic relations with Israel.